

PATENT
Reply under 37 CFR 1.116
EXPEDITED PROCEDURE
Group 1762

REMARKS

Claims 20-39 are pending and rejected in this application. Claims 20 and 30 are amended hereby.

Responsive to the Examiner's objection to the specification, in which the Examiner reviewed page 6, line 4 of the application, the Applicants draw the Examiner's attention to page 8 of the previous amendment. With respect to claim 29, the information referred to starts at page 4, line 6 of the pending application. To which we again draw the Examiner's attention, wherein the dry content of a paper web is discussed. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the objection to the specification should be removed, as the limitations of claim 29 are fully supported by the specification at page 4, lines 6-9.

Responsive to the rejection of claims 20-25, 27, 29-33 and 35-39 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,372,090 (Laapotti '090) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,951,821 (Laapotti '821), Applicants have amended claims 20 and 30, and submit that claims 20-25, 27, 29-33 and 35-39 are now in condition for allowance.

Laapotti '090 discloses a method and apparatus for handling paper or cardboard webs (Figs. 1-4) including felt 1 on which web 12 enters the apparatus. A nip is formed between press shoe 3 and backing roll 4. Water is removed from the web at the pressing nip and web 12 is transferred to the surface of transfer belt 2. Downstream of transfer belt 2 there is arranged a transfer felt 5 that is pressed on transfer belt 2 with section roll 6. The negative pressure produced through air permeable felt 5 attaches web 12 by suction to felt 5. Transfer felt 6 transfers web 12 to a drying felt 8 (column 3, lines 23-35). Downstream of first drying unit 9 is a first unit for applying a treating agent to the surface of web 12 (column 3, lines 45-48). After the first side of web 12 is coated, web 12 is transferred, in a supported manner, to an impingement drying phase

V010215.US

PATENT
Reply under 37 CFR 1.116
EXPEDITED PROCEDURE
Group 1762

and after that web 12 is coated on the other side using the same method. Following the second coating phase there is another impingement drying unit, or units, and after that there may be one or more ordinary cylinder drying units (column 6, lines 20-27).

Laapotti '821 discloses an arrangement and method for transferring a web in a paper machine from a two-felt press nip to a dryer section (Fig. 2). Guide roll 32S of lower felt 30 is arranged so that its position can be adjusted by an adjustment device S and that it is possible to set the magnitude of the curve section of felts 20 and 30 on transfer section roll 27 and on drying cylinder 82 by way of roll 22S (column 9, line 60 through column 10, line 2). The Examiner has further interpreted the movement of S as moving up and down relative to the other support rolls and that this effectively shortens or lengthens the portion of the support surface in contact with the web.

In contrast claim 20, as amended, recites in part:

supporting the material web with an extensible support surface...being extensible in said web direction.

(Emphasis added). Applicants submit that such an invention is neither taught, disclosed nor suggested by Laapotti '090, Laapotti '821 or any of the other cited references, alone or in combination, and includes distinct advantages thereover.

Laapotti '090 and Laapotti '821 disclose a method and apparatus for handling paper or cardboard webs in which a coated web is transferred in a supported manner, the support being extended in a direction substantially perpendicular to the motion of the web. The movement of the support in the Laapotti patents moves a supporting fabric against the web, which, for example, in the case of roll 32S would have a tendency to deviate the direction of the web. In contrast, Applicants' invention extends the support in the direction of the moving web, thereby not altering the course of the moving web allowing the material web to be supported substantially without free

PATENT
Reply under 37 CFR 1.116
EXPEDITED PROCEDURE
Group 1762

draw. Therefore, Laapotti '090, Laapotti '821 and any of the other cited references, alone or in combination fail to disclose, teach or suggest the step of supporting the material web with an extensible support surface being extensible in the web direction, as recited in claim 20.

An advantage of Applicants' invention is that the support is extended in the web direction allowing the support to be retracted and extended without altering the course of the web. Further, the extensibility of the support allows incremental support to be provided along the length of the web. For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that claim 20, and claims 21-25, 27 and 29 depending therefrom, are now in condition for allowance for allowance, which is hereby respectfully requested.

In further contrast, claim 30, as amended, recites in part:

A continuous belt ... being an extensible support... being extensible in said web direction;

(Emphasis added). Applicants submit that such an invention is neither taught, disclosed nor suggested by Laapotti '090, Laapotti '821 or any of the other cited references, alone or in combination, and includes distinct advantages thereover.

Laapotti '090 and Laapotti '821 disclose a method and apparatus for handling paper or cardboard webs in which a coated web is transferred in a supported manner, the support being extended in a direction substantially perpendicular to the motion of the web. The movement of the support in the Laapotti patents moves a supporting fabric against the web, which, for example, in the case of roll 32S would have a tendency to deviate the direction of the web. In contrast, Applicants' invention extends the support in the direction of the moving web, thereby not altering the course of the moving web allowing the material web to be supported substantially without free draw. Therefore, Laapotti '090, Laapotti '821 and any of the other cited references, alone or in combination fail to disclose, teach or suggest a continuous belt being an extensible support being

PATENT
Reply under 37 CFR 1.116
EXPEDITED PROCEDURE
Group 1762

extensible in said web direction, as recited in claim 30.

An advantage of Applicants' invention is that the support is extended in the web direction allowing the support to be retracted and extended without altering the course of the web. Further, the extensibility of the support allows incremental support to be provided along the length of the web. For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that claim 30, and claims 31-33 and 35-39 depending therefrom, are now in condition for allowance for allowance, which is hereby respectfully requested.

Claim 28 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Laapotti '090 in view of Laapotti '821 and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,228,216 (Lindsay, et al.). However, claim 28 depends from claim 20, and claim 20 has been placed in condition for allowance for the reasons given above. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 28 is now in condition for allowance, which is hereby respectfully requested.

Claims 26 and 34 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Laapotti '090 in view of Laapotti '821 and in further view of Japanese Patent No. 48-041007. However, claim 26 depends from claim 20, and claim 34 depends from claim 30, and claims 20 and 30 have been placed in condition for allowance for the reasons given above. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 26 and 34 are now in condition for allowance, which is hereby respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that no combination of the cited references teaches, discloses or suggests the subject matter of the amended claims. The pending claims are therefore in condition for allowance, and Applicants respectfully request entry of this Amendment, withdrawal of all rejections and allowance of the claims.

VO10215.US

PATENT
Reply under 37 CFR 1.116
EXPEDITED PROCEDURE
Group 1762

In the event Applicants have overlooked the need for an extension of time, an additional extension of time, payment of fee, or additional payment of fee, Applicants hereby conditionally petition therefor and authorizes that any charges be made to Deposit Account No. 20-0095,
TAYLOR & AUST, P.C.

Should any question concerning any of the foregoing arise, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (260) 897-3400.

Respectfully submitted,



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TTT6/ge

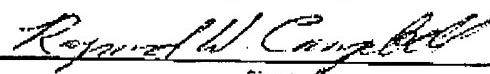
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted via facsimile to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, on: February 10, 2004.

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Name of Registered Representative



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